

WELCOMING CONGRESSMAN MEEKS

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, many of us have the great task of succeeding Members of the House of Representatives that have left, as Reverend and Congressman Floyd Flake has, but indeed, the strong keep coming, and we are so fortunate that a young man a few years back was born in East Harlem, saw fit to go to Queens, got his training there, became an administrative judge for workmen's compensation, and then joined the great legislature of the State of New York in the New York State Assembly. And as I look in front of me, it looks like there is hardly a Member of the New York delegation in our Congress that did not serve in our State legislature.

Having served there for 6 years and working hard each and every day, he was selected by the African-Americans, as well as the Puerto Rican Hispanic Members of that group to head up the Black and Hispanic Caucus. He has worked hard, he has got two lovely daughters that are here with his wife, Simone-Marie. His brothers and his family are here to support him as they were during the great election that with more than a half a dozen candidates, he came through with 57 percent of that vote.

At this time I would like to yield to a senior member, the senior Republican Member of our delegation, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, Chairman RANGEL, serving as the chair of our New York delegation, and my colleagues of the New York delegation, and all of our colleagues, we are so pleased to be able to welcome Mr. MEEKS to the Congress.

Our retired colleague, Floyd Flake, amassed a distinguished record of congressional service. His dedication in fighting for the concerns of his 6th District, his patriotism, his hard work are a testament to the leadership that he displayed, and while Congressman Flake leaves his shoes to fill, his successor seems to me to be able to come with a great potential to do just that.

GREGORY MEEKS comes to the Congress after already having had a distinguished career in public service, graduating from Howard University Law School. He joined the Queens County District Attorney's Office, was quickly promoted to the Office of Special Narcotics Prosecutor, something Mr. RANGEL and I have been working on for a number of years in our battle against drugs. We are pleased to welcome a legislator with the experience and determination in fighting the war on drugs. Congressman MEEKS, I know while he was serving on the New York State Commission on Investigation, directed criminal and civil investigations and major organized crime figures, and we hope he will continue his devotion to

fighting crime as he did in the past. We want to commend you and we wish you well. I am pleased to welcome you and your two daughters, Ebony and Aja and your wife, Simone, to the pantheon of congressional families, and we are here ready to help you in your work. God bless.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, there are so many Members that would like to be heard, but a lot of people have to make trains and planes, and so we have in our delegation not only an outstanding Member from Queens County, but the Democratic county leader that was able to guide the membership of the great organization there so that they were able to make the proper decision for the election, TOM MANTON, for purposes of introducing our brand-new member.

WELCOMING CONGRESSMAN MEEKS

(Mr. MANTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, our newly-elected Member, GREGORY MEEKS, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to welcome you, GREGORY and your family and all of your supporters in Southeast Queens from the 6th Congressional District to this great Hall. I am not going to be repetitive here, but I would just like to say that your credentials were impeccable, starting off after law school as a prosecutor, and later on as a judge in the worker's compensation system, and then your service in the New York State Assembly.

□ 1430

So you have come here, you have hit the ground running, and we welcome you and ask that you have a long career in these sacred halls.

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York yield?

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the Speaker.

The SPEAKER. It would please the Chair to recognize for his first time here the newly elected gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), and to recognize him on behalf of the House and offer him an opportunity to speak to the House.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS FOR SUPPORT

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The first feeling that I have is: God is good. God is good. He has truly blessed me, and but by His grace am I here today. He has blessed me for an individual who grew up in public housing and a product of public education to be able to go on and receive a degree at the great institution known as Howard University School of Law, which I am

proud of; to be blessed with individuals who are really responsible for me being here.

Mr. Speaker, it started with my mother, who is not with us any longer, but she is with us. She gave me the strength, the support, and the upbringing so that this day could be possible. She gave me the vision and the determination to make things happen, and I will be so ever thankful to God who blessed me with her as a mother.

I want to thank my dad, who is here, who always was behind me and taught me the lessons of life and family.

I want to bless and thank my wife, Simone-Marie, who gave her energy, her time, and gave me her permission to seek the office of the United States House of Representatives.

My sisters, Rosalyn and Janella, who are here, who worked diligently day and night on this campaign, thank you.

And the Lord blessed me with two beautiful daughters who I am so proud of for all that they are doing and how they are growing up. That is Ebony and Aja.

And, as indicated, my mother is not with me, but the Lord blessed me with a great mother-in-law, Miss Eleanor Sing.

Mr. Speaker, let me say thank you, particularly, to my political godfather, Bob Simmons, and all of the individuals who are up in the balcony who are responsible for that huge victory on February 3. I will never forget them, for they are why I am here to represent the constituency and the people of the 6th Congressional District.

I know that I have very big shoes to fill, and I can say that I am not Floyd Flake. I am GREGORY MEEKS. I am going to do the best I can. I believe that Floyd Flake was on the right path, the same path of many of the Members of this hall that I have admired for a long time. The path of Barbara Jordan who sat here. The path of Shirley Chisholm. The path of Adam Powell. The path of Brother DELLUMS. The path of Charlie Rangel. The path of Thomas Manton.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with you. I look forward to trying to make a difference in the lives of the people of this great country. I look forward to living the dream that Dr. King had that all of us will be able to walk together, talk together, live together under this big tent and this great Nation. Thank you very much.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair wishes to simply observe for the RECORD, if I might, that we are welcoming a new Member whom we are delighted to have with us and who we think has a great future. We are welcoming him on a day when we are losing a great Member who has had a great career and to whom we are all indebted for being a model of representing democracy in a free society.

So while we are saying good-bye to the gentleman from California (Mr.